

Amendments to the Claims

1-3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently amended) A method for ~~preventing~~ decreasing or treating retinopathy resulting from damage and/or degeneration of the outer retinal layers, which comprises administering an effective amount of a hepatocyte growth factor as an active ingredient to a patient in need thereof.

5. (Currently amended) A method for ~~preventing~~ decreasing or treating a disease selected from macular degeneration or retinitis pigmentosa, which comprises administering an effective amount of a hepatocyte growth factor as an active ingredient to a patient in need thereof.

6. (Currently amended) A method for ~~preventing~~ decreasing or treating retinopathy, which comprises administering an effective amount of a hepatocyte growth factor as an active ingredient to a patient in need thereof.

7. (New) The method according to claim 4, which comprises the step of parenterally administering hepatocyte growth factor.

8. (New) The method according to claim 5, which comprises the step of parenterally administering hepatocyte growth factor.

9. (New) The method according to claim 6, which comprises the step of parenterally administering hepatocyte growth factor.

10. (New) The method according to claim 4, which comprises the step of administering hepatocyte growth factor in a form of an eye drop, an eye ointment, or an injection.

11. (New) The method according to claim 5, which comprises the step of administering hepatocyte growth factor in a form of an eye drop, an eye ointment, or an injection.

12. (New) The method according to claim 6, which comprises the step of administering hepatocyte growth factor in a form of an eye drop, an eye ointment, or an injection.